

CIA sought to oust Sandinistas, Kadafi and Castro, Turner says

By Ernest B. Furgurson

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Washington — Stansfield Turner, former Central Intelligence Agency director, disclosed yesterday that during the Carter administration the agency sought ways to overthrow not only Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini, but Libya's Muammar el Kadafi, Cuba's Fidel Castro and Nicaragua's Sandinista regime.

As CIA director, Admiral Turner never sent such a plan to the White House — but that was because he found "no way" practically to oust those leaders.

"There is nothing morally wrong with trying to overthrow a foreign government by covert means," he said. But he objected to current CIA involvement in Nicaragua because "we've given the impression we're trying to put a dictator back in."

"If we had a knight in shining armor," that would be different, he went on. But in supporting veterans of the defeated Somoza government, "we don't appear to be backing an acceptable alternative" to the Sandinistas.

Mr. Turner expressed disapproval of a new, secret U.S. Army intelligence organization reported in yesterday's papers. "One of the major intelligence issues the country faces is getting the Pentagon to understand it can't have all intelligence resources under its control," he added.

He also said that the Army's Intelligence Support Activity (ISA) "did not exist, as far as I know, during my tenure." This appeared to contradict sources who said the unit was established during the Iranian hostage crisis in 1980, the last year of the Carter administration.

Backed by a 31-year Navy career before his four years at the CIA, Mr. Turner told reporters at breakfast that "the military doesn't fit well into the covert activity role. . . . It is not the organization to do human intelligence."

The Army's ISA is said to be active in El Salvador and in support of guerrillas opposing the Nicaraguan government. In the beginning it reportedly operated without congressional authorization and without formal awareness by either the CIA or



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STANSFIELD TURNER

... supports covert operations

the Defense Intelligence Agency.

It is already known from earlier reports that this country tried to find means to replace Ayatollah Khomeini as one way of freeing the captives in Iran.

Thus his disclosure that under him the CIA explored ways to oust him was not surprising. But the agency has not publicized any efforts during the Carter administration to draw contingency plans to get rid of Colonel Kadafi, President Castro and the Sandinistas.

Mr. Turner did not elaborate on what means were considered, or specifically why they were rejected. He did say that in Libya, "not enough base" existed for covert organization among the government or military.

Although secret efforts to murder or otherwise depose President Castro during the Kennedy administration have become well known, no one had disclosed that any thought was given to toppling his government during the Carter administration.

In Nicaragua, the leftist Sandinistas toppled the government of Anastasio Somoza Debayle in mid-1979, and millions of dollars' worth of United States aid was sent to help

the country recover from civil war, even as the new regime emphasized its ties with Cuba.

Although the CIA is required by law to inform Congress of its covert operations, it does not have to report on all the many inquiries it makes or plans to meet future contingencies.

Mr. Turner reiterated that "I'm not opposed to trying to overthrow the Sandinista government. . . . We should judge whether to overthrow any government not by abstract morality, but by which government is better, both for the United States and the country involved." Later he added, "Especially the country involved."

Today, he said, "I doubt there is any practical way to overthrow the Sandinista government."

In El Salvador, he stated, the United States should be supporting the existing government against rebels, while at the same time pressuring the government to improve its human-rights record.

But for President Reagan to initiate the kind of covert action he did in Central America was "bound to cause trouble," he asserted. Since the requirement for congressional oversight has existed, "you can't get away with such controversial actions" because a "general consensus" of support is necessary.

U.S. identification with the Somoza regime and alleged support of ex-Somocistas today "limits our ability to play a role in the really important countries in the area, Panama and Mexico," he said.

Mr. Turner said that "I get vibes from the press that something in the hundreds" of former CIA covert operatives have been called back for current efforts in Central America. Some of these, he indicated, were among the agents he forced out in 1978 in a controversial cutback of the agency's clandestine operations staff.

His own feeling, he said, is that the nation pays too much attention to its strategic nuclear relationship with the Soviet Union and the defense of Europe, and not enough to developing a force to intervene in remote areas. He predicted that within a decade it was "highly likely" such an ability would be needed in the Middle East-Persian Gulf region.

Latin Vote: Symbol of Assertiveness

By PHILIP TAUBMAN

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, May 4 — The vote by the House Select Committee on Intelligence Tuesday to cut off American support for anti-Government forces in Nicaragua demonstrates the problem of using covert intelligence operations to promote contested foreign policy goals.

News Analysis Although the committee action is not certain of full Congressional approval, Government officials say

the vote is a symbol of growing assertiveness by Congress in intelligence matters.

They say it may presage a basic change in the relationship between Congress and the executive branch over the conduct of intelligence activities, with Congress's becoming increasingly involved in decisions that have long been the sole province of the White House and the Central Intelligence Agency.

President Reagan, calling the committee vote "very irresponsible," said today that "it would set a very dangerous precedent" if it became policy. He added that the vote "literally was taking away the ability of the executive branch to carry out its constitutional responsibilities."

But the debate over Central America does not mean that all covert activities face trouble, according to the former and current intelligence officials.

Congress approved and, according to members of both intelligence committees, continues to support an increase in American aid to insurgents resisting Soviet forces in Afghanistan.

Congress also approved covert C.I.A. funds for paramilitary forces in eastern Turkey that could be deployed in Iran if the current Moslem fundamentalist Government fell and a Communist takeover seemed imminent.

The difference between these activities and the arming and training of paramilitary forces to fight in Nicaragua, the officials said, is that there is a consensus favoring aid to Afghan rebels and efforts to protect American interests in the Persian Gulf region. In addition, the Soviet threat in Afghanistan is unambiguous.

By contrast, they said, the Reagan Administration has had difficulty persuading Congress that the United States should be involved in the internal affairs of Nicaragua.

Forces Set in Motion Years Ago

Gone are the days, according to the current and former intelligence officials, when the executive branch could freely conduct secret operations to influence events abroad, regardless of domestic political support in the United States.

The committee vote, which crystallized forces set in motion almost 10 years ago when Congress began to assert itself in intelligence matters, indicates that covert activities are likely to be challenged by Congress, and even stopped, when they involve volatile foreign policy issues.

Adm. Stansfield Turner, the Director of Central Intelligence during the Carter Administration, said, "The committee action confirms that you cannot count on undertaking covert activities if there isn't widespread agreement that they, and the policy behind them, are in the national interest."

A current intelligence official said the vote "sharply constrains the situations in which covert actions can be considered as an option."

Senior Administration officials acknowledge that the covert activities in Nicaragua have, in effect, backfired.

Instead of developing as planned into a quiet means of advancing United States interests in Central America, the activities have served as a rallying point for critics of covert operations, according to the officials.

In the short term, the reaction may force the Reagan Administration to reduce or end some of its covert intelligence operations in Central America. In the long term, the result may be an increase in the kinds of Congressional checks on intelligence activities that intelligence officials strenuously oppose.

"The Administration has inadvertently put the whole intelligence community into an exposed position that could lead to serious inroads on the authority of the President," Admiral Turner said.

For example, Representative Wyche Fowler Jr., a Georgia Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, has introduced legislation to give Congress a formal veto over covert operations unrelated to the expenditure of funds. Under current procedures, Congress can exercise power over covert activities by limited budget authorizations and appropriations, but it has rarely done so.

Excesses and Abuses in 70's

A decade ago domestic support was not a consideration in the planning and execution of covert intelligence activities. Before Congressional revelations in the mid-1970's of intelligence excesses and abuses, including plans to assassinate foreign leaders and the illegal surveillance of United States citizens, Congress played a minimal role in intelligence matters.

Only a few senior members of Congress were notified about covert intelligence activities, according to former intelligence officials, and little effort was made by Congress to monitor operations as they progressed.

That began to change in 1974 with the passage of an amendment that required the executive branch to notify Congress about covert operations. The Hughes-Ryan Amendment, named after its sponsors, Senator Harold E. Hughes, Democrat of Iowa, and Representative

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Judge nixes trio's suit in LSD test

By Tracy Thompson
Staff writer

A federal judge Friday dismissed the claims of three former prisoners at the Atlanta Federal Penitentiary who were given LSD in mind-control experiments secretly sponsored by the Central Intelligence Agency in 1956, saying that the inmates waited too long to sue the government.

The ruling by U.S. District Judge Richard Freeman came in a suit filed here against the government in 1981 by the inmates, Don Scott, James T. Knight and Ferrell Kirk. All three said in their lawsuits that they had suffered flashbacks, hallucinations and memory loss after the 1956 experiments.

Tom Maddox, an attorney for two of the three inmates, said Friday that the ruling will "probably be appealed," and called it "a travesty."

The CIA "consciously kept this program secret from its inception," he charged, "and I think that's outrageous."

The CIA's sponsorship of the experiments was not revealed until 1977, when then-CIA director Adm. Stansfield Turner testified before a congressional subcommittee probing alleged CIA intelligence-gathering abuses.

However, Freeman said in his 17-page ruling that the former inmates knew the experiments were sponsored by the government, if not specifically the CIA, in 1956.

And, he said, they knew they were suffering harmful effects of taking LSD "at the latest in the early 1960s," even though it was not until the late 1960s that the potential long-term damage LSD could cause became public knowledge.

But the inmates' first claim against the government was not filed until October 1977, nearly 17 years later —

long after the expiration of a two-year statute of limitations that applies to damage suits against the government, Freeman ruled.

Freeman discredited much of the testimony presented by the inmates at a hearing last February about how much they knew about the experiments, quoting a detailed agreement each supposedly signed before participating in the LSD experiments.